It's My Life: Employment

A Guide for Transition Services from Casey Family Programs

Employment Guide

casey family programs
fostering families. fostering change.

About Casey Family Programs

Casey Family Programs' mission is to provide and improve—and ultimately to prevent the need for—foster care.

Established by United Parcel Service founder Jim Casey, the Seattle-based national operating foundation has served children, youth, and families in the child welfare system since 1966.

The foundation operates in two ways. It provides direct services, and it promotes advances in child-welfare practice and policy.

Casey collaborates with foster, kinship, and adoptive parents to provide safe, loving homes for youth in its direct care. The foundation also collaborates with counties, states, and American Indian and Alaska Native tribes to improve services and outcomes for the more than 500,000 young people in out-of-home care across the U.S.

Drawing on four decades of front-line work with families and alumni of foster care, Casey Family Programs develops tools, practices, and policies to nurture all youth in care and to help parents strengthen families at risk of needing foster care.

For more information about this guide, contact Casey Family Programs at 1300 Dexter Avenue North, Floor 3, Seattle, WA 98109.

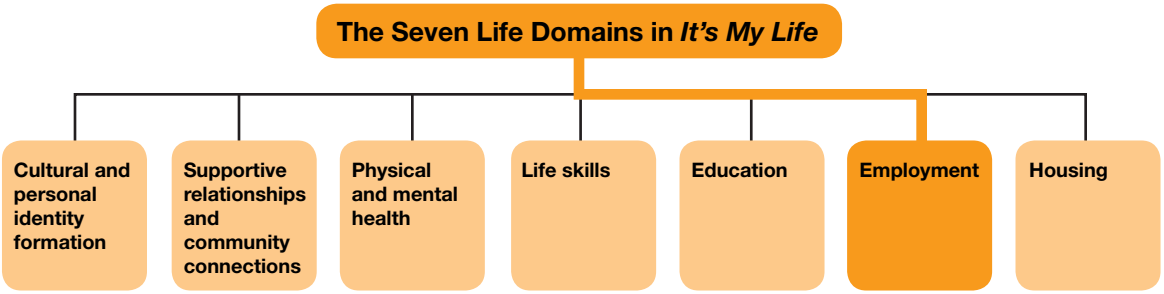
Visit our Web site at www.casey.org.

Contents

It's My Life Guides

In 2001 Casey Family Programs—working with young people in foster care, alumni of care, families, and other stakeholders—published *It's My Life,* a framework to develop services for young people preparing to make the transition from foster care to successful adulthood. *It's My Life* promotes a holistic approach to transition services. It is based on the belief that the domains of our lives are interconnected.

It's My Life guides build on that framework, offering specific strategies, tactics, and resources for youth and the adults who guide and support them. *It's My Life: Employment* is the first guide in this series.



Overview:
Employment for Young People in Foster Care

About the resources we suggest

Many resources in this guide are found on the Internet. They are good examples of what you can find by typing your topic—for example, mentoring or interviewing—into a search engine such as www.google.com.

We're enthusiastic about a couple of resources in particular:

- The Riley Guide (www.rileyguide.com) is the most comprehensive guide we've found to employability resources and their usefulness.
- The U.S. government sponsors comprehensive and accessible sites such as www.careervoyages.org, www.careeronestop.org, and www.onetcenter.org.

We encourage you and the young people you work with to surf the Internet for other resources. And when you get to any Web site (including the ones we've recommended), poke around on the site. Most offer a wide range of information related to employability development and job search.

Overview

Few young adults, even those from the most advantaged situations, walk out the door at age 18 ready to take care of themselves. Most young people rely on caring adults to support them with guidance, housing and financial assistance, and ongoing emotional connections.

Young people from foster care often miss out on these supports traditionally provided by families. They may also have added challenges due to earlier abuse, neglect, and separation. Every year nearly 20,000 young people leave the foster care system with little, if any, financial support or adult backup.

A good number of them go on to find work, start families, and build lifelong ties to friends and community. But too many struggle to support themselves after leaving care.

Recent research documents this struggle. A Casey Family Programs study of our alumni showed low personal and household incomes, reflecting the difficulties that many were experiencing in earning a living wage.[1] Other studies of foster care alumni have found that two to four years after leaving foster care, only half were regularly employed.[2] Too often, the employment and economic outcomes of youth formerly in foster care resemble those of people living at or below the federal poverty line.[3]

In 2001 Casey Family Programs developed a youth-centered framework called *It's My Life* to guide services for young people as they make the transition from foster care to adulthood. It supports those who want to help these young people acquire the skills, experience, and attitudes they need to be successful, contributing citizens. This *It's My Life: Employment* guide builds on that framework.

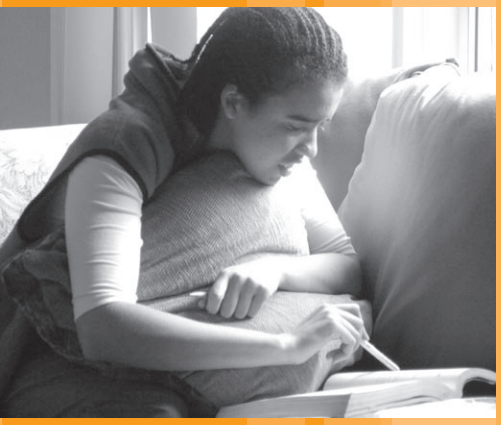
Developing employability for young people requires early, coordinated, and ongoing efforts to help them learn about themselves, expand their knowledge of options available to them, and set and achieve their employment goals.

[1] P. J. Pecora, J. Williams, R. J. Kesler, A. C. Downs, K. O'Brien, E. Hiripi, et al. (2003). Assessing the effects of foster care: Early results from the Casey national alumni study. Seattle, WA: Casey Family Programs. Retrieved August 2, 2004, from www.casey.org.

[2] Annie E. Casey Foundation (2004). Moving youth from risk to opportunity: Teens in foster care. In KIDS Count 2004 data book. Retrieved August 2, 2004, from www.aecf.org/kidscount/databook/essay/essay3.htm.

[3] Federal Register 66, no. 33 (February 16, 2001), 10695–10697.

Preparing Young People for Employment



Our recommendation: Start early to develop employability

Career and employment success is rooted in an ongoing journey connecting parents, caregivers, friends, communities, schools, mentors, and advocates. This network provides a caring and enduring sense of stability while young people are getting the skills necessary to function as adults. In particular, it is critical to enlist the support and participation of caregivers, including group home providers, when implementing any of the strategies recommended in this guide. (See "Ten Activities for Caregivers" on page 72.)

This guide recommends five specific steps child welfare practitioners can take to help young people get satisfying careers in today's workforce:

- Cultivate interests and skills, and relate them to future employment.
- Promote activities that help young people explore careers.
- Build job-readiness skills.
- Help young people get and keep jobs.
- Promote work-related education and training after high school.

We strongly recommend that young people begin preparing for future employment as early as age 11 or sixth grade. However, even if you are working with young adults, we recommend that you still address each of the five steps listed above. At first glance, these steps may appear to be sequential; in fact, they're part of an iterative, cyclical process of lifelong learning. At its best and most powerful, developing employability will be woven into young people's daily living experiences.

Early on, youth need opportunities and encouragement to think about the kinds of jobs they might enjoy and be good at. At the same time, they need to visit workplaces where they can observe and interact with adults to help them form realistic ideas about what it's like to work. Those visits may also pique new interests they may pursue independently or through elective classes at school.

By middle school age, youth need to begin learning job readiness skills such as appropriate social skills for the workplace. Preparation may include assigned chores at home, odd jobs in the community, summer work experience programs, volunteering, or community service projects. At this age, youth can start career or employment portfolios, create their first résumés, apply for jobs, and practice interviewing. They also need opportunities to visit a variety of work settings where employees with diverse racial and cultural backgrounds can model successful employment.

In high school, the messages that parents, caregivers, and friends give about continuing education after high school—whether it's going to college or signing up for vocational training—greatly influence young people's motivation and expectations about education and careers. At this age, young people should begin to make longer-term career plans, and ideally the elective classes they choose should reflect those plans. Young people may also draw on the resources of special education transition planning, school career centers, and guidance counselors, and may participate in training programs. High school students need to update their employment portfolios, enhance job readiness skills, and keep working (even in after-school and summer jobs). Having a successfully employed mentor can be especially important for someone in high school.

After high school or postsecondary education, young adults need to put their career plans into practice. As employed adults, they'll learn more about potential jobs that interest them, and consider career changes based on new interests. They'll check out these opportunities, polish their résumés and interviewing skills, perhaps take a class to learn needed skills, and then advance to a new job.

This guide gives you a wide variety of strategies and resources for coaching young people, from age 11 to adulthood, through the continuum of career development to employment.

find it

in this section

Cultivate interests and skills and relate them to future employment

The greater the variety of our experiences, the more we explore our abilities and interests, improve our skills, and learn about ourselves and the options available to us. Ideally, this process begins in early childhood and continues throughout our lives. The expectation that, as adults, we will be employed in work that relates to our skills and interests also starts in early childhood with the familiar questions and comments: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" or "Wow, the way you catch that ball—you could be a major league player!"

Work with young people (and their caregivers) to make sure they have opportunities to:

- Enjoy the childhood experiences normally available to children raised by their birth families.
- Choose social, arts, and recreational activities that are fun.
- Develop interests and hobbies.
- See adults at work in a variety of settings, and have contact with employed adults as role models.

Benchmarks for successful self-discovery

Look for the ability of young people to:

- Talk about their talents, skills, and interests.
- Identify jobs or careers that interest them.
- Balance their personal strengths and skills with job and career requirements in an increasingly realistic way.
- Develop motivation to work.
- Interact with employed adults as positive role models.

We recommend the following three strategies to help young people learn about themselves and explore their employment possibilities:

1. Put young people in charge.

2. Encourage participation in community activities.
3. Use assessments to link abilities and interests to future employment.

STRATEGY # 1

Put young people in charge

Young people in care often feel powerless, which decreases their motivation to try new activities, learn new skills, or work toward long-term goals such as employment. Encourage young people to identify what they want and need, and plan how they will reach their goals and achieve their dreams. Even young children need to be asked their opinions, have them respectfully considered, and be given choices whenever possible. It can sometimes be challenging for caregivers and professionals to stand aside while young people chart their own paths, but it can be very empowering for youth when you honor their choices.

Many well-developed practices are available to keep young people at the center of their own planning process. **Person-Centered Planning** is one that helps young people:

- Talk about their talents, strengths, and interests.
- Identify their dreams and the important people in their lives who can help them fulfill those dreams.
- Determine specific goals and develop a plan of action for fulfilling their vision, including specific commitments from those involved.

Person-Centered Planning

For background information on this planning practice, download the *Transition to Independence Process (TIP) Development and Operations Manual* by Hewitt B. Clark, Ph.D., from http://tip.fmhi.usf.edu/pubs.htm.

For an excellent independent contractor who provides technical assistance and training on how to use the Person-Centered Planning model, contact:
Timothy J. Smith
Phone: (512) 587-7896
E-mail: smithgenetics@yahoo.com

Young People Speak Out

How early interests can lead to career goals

When Kristi, an 18-year-old, was asked how she chose her college, she said, "I was looking for a college to start me off in the right direction toward my goals . . . it has American Sign Language courses which I would like to take. I have been in the Casey Youth Leadership Committee for a year where I've learned a great deal about advocating for others. I have acquired skills in sign language through courses in school and the deaf community. As I enter into college I hope to expand my knowledge in this area."

Kristi's caseworker's comments

"Kristi became interested in sign language in the fifth grade, and started teaching herself American Sign Language the next year. We have encouraged her interest in this area and have assisted her in obtaining sign language courses through her high school and the community. Kristi also provides assistance at agency events to another youth in foster care. She would like to be a certified ASL interpreter as well as a psychologist or some type of helping professional."

Young People Speak Out

Advice for practitioners

Youth attending the National Youth Employment Coalition's 2004 Policy Forum participated in a Youth-Only Session. They presented their recommendations (below) to adults who work with young people.

Demonstrate integrity: Do what you say you are going to do. Practice what you preach. Promote individual accountability. Develop trusting relationships with youth.

Advertise programs and opportunities: Use billboards to tell stories of how getting involved has helped young people.

Seek to motivate youth: Use rewards and incentives such as recreation, dance, music, and food. Focus on positive things about young people. Push them to achieve goals. Take them on educational and/or career-related trips. Practice tough love.

Educate young people: Provide quality educational opportunities: quality staff, necessary supplies, hands-on learning opportunities. Youth need teachers who show them how to do things and engage them, not instructors who tell them what to do. Provide financial aid for advanced education. Educate youth about American history, government, voting, and issues.

Involve youth with the community: Have a community youth day. Take youth to meetings in Washington, D.C. (or state/local levels), to have their voices heard. Hold meetings in the community.

Focus on the personal and be sensitive to youth needs: To participate, youth need things such as transportation, respect, and rights.

STRATEGY # 2

Encourage participation in community activities

Work with caregivers to make sure that young people of all ages have choices for participation in field trips, after-school clubs and programs, camps, cultural events, and resource fairs. Not only will they gain new experiences and opportunities to learn more about themselves, they'll also see adults from different racial and cultural backgrounds at work.

Resources that encourage participation in community activities

Park and recreation departments

Look for a variety of activities.

- Visit Recreation.gov (www.recreation.gov/) for a guide to local and state parks and information on accessing the activities they offer.
- The National Park Service (www.nps.gov/learn/index2.htm) provides information about using the parks as a classroom, a guide to the Junior Ranger program, and online activities to learn about our national parks. For example, in "What Do Rangers Do?" (www.nps.gov/acad/kids/rangintro.htm), young people can click pictures of national park rangers at work to find out about their different jobs.

Museums

Museums afford much more than simply a standard tour of exhibits. Many offer art classes and summer camps, internships and volunteer opportunities, programs for young artists, and so on.

- To find just about any museum in the U.S.—art, science, technology, kites, wooden nickels, you name it—visit icom.museum/vlmp/usa.html. Click **By State** to find museums near you.
- For young people too far away to visit a museum in person, virtual visits can be fun. For example, they can take a NASA Electronic Fieldtrip (education.nasa.gov/divisions/techprodoffice/programs/dln.html).

Zoos

Most zoos offer educational programs and activities, classes, and camps, as well as volunteer and internship programs. Many zoos also sponsor ZooMobiles and other community outreach programs that take animals and education to the people.

Young people can take virtual visits to zoos that include kid-friendly games, tours, and live Webcams of the animals. Examples include:

- Lincoln Park Zoo, Chicago: www.lpzoo.com/tour/tour.html
- The National Zoo, Washington D.C.: http://natzoo.si.edu/default.cfm
- Tramline Virtual Field Trips (www.field-guides.com/trips.htm) provides a listing of subjects and suggested activities (organized by grade level) along with lesson plans and follow-up activities. Other virtual field trips cover such subjects as science, history, and geography. Visit Antarctica, the rain forest, or the Big Apple (New York City).

Local libraries

Increasingly, library activities for young people include concerts, games, crafts, storytelling, and workshops. To find your local library and the events it offers, visit Libraries on the Web: http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Libweb.

Youth organizations

Some of the national organizations listed below sponsor groups specifically for youth in foster care. Don't forget to look into school or faith-based organizations as well.

- **Girl Scouts** To find a group in your area, visit www.girlscouts.org.
- **Boy Scouts** To find a group in your area, visit www.scouting.org.
- **4-H** is the youth education branch of the Cooperative Extension Service, a program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Each state and county has access to a County Extension office for young people age 5 to 19. For links to youth-oriented programs in each state, visit www.4h-USA.org. For a list of all 4-H programs, grants, and publications, visit www.fourhcouncil.edu.
- **Boys & Girls Clubs** To find a club in your city, visit www.bgca.org, click **Find a Club** at screen left, and then type the name of the city. Or call (800) 854-2582.
- **Camp Fire** For more information, visit www.campfire.org.

STRATEGY # 3

Use assessments to link abilities and interests to future employment

A variety of career and vocational assessments, both informal and formal, can help young people identify their abilities and interests starting as early as elementary school. (Children as young as 8 can take the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment.)

Informal assessments

You can find many free informal assessments that young people can take and score on their own, either with pencil and paper or online. Some are exercises to help them think about who they are. Others are more like inventories to explore interests and aptitudes, or to match aptitudes and interests to career choices.

Generally young people find these to be a fun way to learn about themselves, and if they take the assessments in group settings, they enjoy comparing and discussing the results. The validity of such results varies, but they can be the springboard for lively discussions.

Assessment tools young people can access on their own

The Riley Guide

Definitely check out www.rileyguide.com. To find information about assessment tools and links for locating them, click **Prepare to Search**, and then click **Self-Assessment Resources**. Topics include a definition of self-assessment, types of assessments, popular self-directed tools, and so on.

YouthJobs

This site, www.youthjobs.ca/who.html, offers a triad of assessment resources. Youth begin with a Personal Vision Inventory, and then move to a profile of their values, interests, and personality. In the final step, youth identify skills: entrepreneurial, personality, transferable, and work-related. Those who learn better by listening can click the radio and listen to the information.

Occupational Information Network (O*NET)

This federal site, http://online.onetcenter.org, is designed as an easy-to-use resource that supports efforts to identify and develop the skills of the American workforce. The site maintains a comprehensive database of worker attributes and job characteristics, and has tools enabling young people to enter their skills and match them with skills needed for various occupations.

Monster

Monster.com offers career interest-inventory and assessment tools for prospective job seekers at http://tools.monster.com/archives/tickletests.

Formal assessments

If the validity of assessment results is important, a wide range of formal, norm-referenced, standardized vocational assessment tools are also available. These usually require a structured procedure in which you or a certified professional administer the test and interpret the results. A fee is often charged (the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment is an exception), although you may be able to get these assessments at no cost through an employment and training program or young people's schools.

Before you choose an assessment tool, make sure that the results will be useful:

- Discuss with the young person what they want to assess, until you're both clear about it. Then make sure the assessment you're considering is designed to provide that information.
- Make sure that the assessment is appropriate for the young person's age, language, developmental and reading level, gender, and ethnicity, and that any disabilities can be accommodated.
- Check the reliability and validity evidence provided by the publisher, as well as any ethnicity and gender data that might suggest possible bias. Don't place undue significance on the results of any one measure, to avoid overemphasizing the cultural or gender bias that may exist in one assessment.
- Consider the cost and ease of administering, scoring, and interpreting the results.

Casey Life Skills tools

These nationally recognized tools were developed for youth in out-of-home care to assess life skills including employment preparedness. Following assessment, the tools guide you through the development of a learning plan for young people in four age groups: 8–10, 11–14, 15–18, and young adult.

These Web-based tools consist of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessments (ACLSA), the *Life Skills Guidebook*, and a curriculum for foster parents, "Ready, Set, Fly." Other supplements are designed to help specific youth such as young parents, pregnant young women, and American Indians.

The Casey Life Skills tools are free of charge and confidential. They are available at www.caseylifeskills.org.

Other resources for assessment

Tests and Other Assessments: Helping You Make Better Career Decisions

This U.S. Department of Labor guide, appropriate for older teens and young adults, explains how assessment instruments are used in choosing jobs and career counseling, and gives tips and strategies for taking tests.

Another guide, *Testing and Assessment: A Guide to Good Practices for Workforce Development Programs,* is expected to be available in late 2004. Look for both guides at www.onetcenter.org/guides.html.

A Counselor's Guide to Career Assessment Instruments

This book, published by the National Career Development Association (NCDA), reviews the leading career assessment instruments. A "User's Matrix" includes more than 200 assessments used in career exploration by schools, workforce centers, and employers. It identifies each instrument by characteristics assessed, use level (e.g., level of education—elementary through college), and whether the instruments are appropriate for disabled or disadvantaged populations. The guide can be purchased from NCDA, www.ncda.org.

find it

in this section

Promote activities that help young people explore careers

Earning a living in a job or career that corresponds to one's interests and aptitudes is a considerable part of life's enjoyment. Frequent and varied career exploration increases the chance that youth will identify and expand potential career interests, and entertain employment opportunities they may otherwise never have considered. Watching people work helps young people make the connection between what they learn in school and how it applies to work. A positive work experience may inspire youth to improve their school performance and set long-range education or training goals.

Historically, families have provided career guidance and opportunities to work in the community. Some families guide young people into certain professions or trades or toward employment in the family business. Many foster care youth, however, have had limited exposure to the work world, and need supportive adults who will promote and guide their career exploration and goal setting.

For many young people, particularly youth of color, knowledge of their ancestors' histories in this country is critically important in the development of their own sense of who they are. Knowing and understanding the employment challenges that were faced by their ancestors can give them a sense of the sacrifices that were made on their behalf, the progress that's been made, and the opportunities that are now available to them. Many young people from out-of-home care need to be connected with adults who are willing to discuss this aspect of their culture.

Often, career exploration activities are arranged for only "when you grow up" jobs, but they are equally valid for early work experience. For example, if Peter must decide whether his summer job before high school will be picking berries or working in fast food, arrange visits beforehand to those work sites and encourage conversation with workers there.

Benchmarks for successful career exploration

By middle school age, make sure young people:

- Have had a variety of experiences to explore career areas of interest—the more the better—to expand their knowledge about possible career options.
- Have had opportunities to see people of diverse races, attributes, and backgrounds in a wide variety of jobs, from entry level to management, in the trades and in professional positions.
- Discuss what they're learning from these experiences, and how that's shaping their ideas about future employment, education, and training.
- Understand the preparation needed for careers—for example, education, training, physical ability—and how their current education and activities relate.
- Understand the monetary and non-monetary benefits associated with a career or area of interest—for example, weighing the fun of a job at the carnival with a longer-term look at benefits and pay increases.

By high school age, look for young people's ability to:

- Set realistic postsecondary goals.
- Pursue a course of study (academic or vocational/technical) and participate in extracurricular activities that will help them achieve their goals after high school.
- Based on work site visits, interviews, and research, understand the education and training requirements, and the job responsibilities and opportunities, for potential career paths.

We recommend the following seven strategies to help young people explore careers through experience.

1. Arrange job shadowing experiences.
2. Set up career and job mentoring opportunities.
3. Find volunteer experiences.
4. Develop work-based learning experiences.
5. Explore vocational or technical classes.
6. Introduce entrepreneurship.
7. Improvise other individual and group activities.

Resources for job shadowing

JobShadow.org

This comprehensive site has all the information you need to set up a job shadow. It supplies how-to guides you can pass along to employers who want to host job shadows, information for educators who want to connect job shadows with classroom activities, and information for students who want to shadow someone on the job.

You'll also find information about how to set up and run a job shadow program in your community in the "Brochure" and "How-to Guide." Click **Getting Started** at www.jobshadow.org, or call (800) 373-3174 to receive free copies in the mail.

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work

Visit www.daughtersandsonstowork.org for everything you need to know to set up a "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work" day in your community—planning tips, activities, an organizers' tool kit, and other useful resources.

STRATEGY # 1

Arrange job shadowing experiences

Job shadowing pairs young people with someone in the workforce to see what a particular job is like. Young people accompany a worker for a day or more to watch them at work, and talk with them about the background and skills needed for the job. If young people are likely to encounter discrimination on the job, job shadowing can be a good opportunity to match them with someone who has successfully dealt with those issues. In middle school, job shadows in a wide variety of areas are appropriate; by high school, youth will want job shadows that reflect their career areas of interest.

STRATEGY # 2

Set up career and job mentoring opportunities

Mentors fall into two broad categories: career mentors and job mentors. Both, however, enter into a long-term relationship with young people (as opposed to job shadowing, which is usually a one-day affair), and that relationship generally takes place where the mentor works. A successful experience with either type of mentor can boost young people's self-confidence, optimism, and motivation for work.

- Career mentors help young people get an overview of a job and career, and provide gentle guidance in following that career path. For example, if an 11-year-old expresses a passion for playing music, a local musician could be an ideal mentor—taking the youth to rehearsals, introducing him or her to band members, or giving advice on his or her instrument and the direction the lessons are taking.

- Job mentors give support, counsel, and constructive feedback related to work. Older young people will benefit from a job mentor after they've found a job that interests them. For example, a physician's assistant could be a persuasive mentor for youth working in a hospital—checking in regularly, coaching on daily job challenges, or giving advice about the next job or further training.

In addition, a mentor who reflects a youth's race, culture, gender, disability, or sexual orientation can provide effective coaching in dealing with prejudices that may arise at work.

You may find mentors through community programs or in young people's natural support systems. Consider online mentoring if you can't find a good match in your community.

STRATEGY # 3

Find volunteer experiences

The right volunteer experiences can help young people explore careers, build résumés, and learn and practice work, team, and leadership skills. Self-confidence from the accomplishment and recognition of volunteering, making new friends, and getting to know one's community are also benefits. Service organizations often sponsor community volunteer events such as neighborhood cleanups where even children can participate in groups. By middle school, youth can look for individual opportunities such as helping in retirement homes or at the local zoo.

Work with young people to identify work sites of interest, and then help them set up a volunteer experience. Many states mandate community service for high school graduation, so the high school counselor's office is a good resource for locating volunteer opportunities. The volunteers, as well as the volunteer sites, need ongoing support and supervision.

Resources for mentoring

MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership

MENTOR offers extensive information and guidance about all facets of mentorship. To find a potential mentor in your community, type your ZIP code on the home page. Visit: www.mentoring.org.

Netmentors

This national Web community, www.netmentors.org, connects more than 1,000 mentors and teens in over 70 careers.

Young People Speak Out

Volunteer work leads to a career choice

"At first it was just about getting the hours, but now it's turned into something that's so much more," says Caminiti, an 18-year-old student at Springfield's Sacred Heart–Griffin High School in Illinois, of her volunteer work in the health field. "I actually have a passion for it now. Getting the service hours is fine by me, but I would be doing it anyway."

Caminiti's volunteer work helped her choose a career. After volunteering with a tobacco prevention program, and later helping to create one of her own, Caminiti says she plans to work in the health education field permanently.

Resources for finding volunteer experiences

ServiceLeader

This organization, www.serviceleader.org, tells you pretty much everything you'd want to know about how to find, choose, and set up individual and group volunteer learning experiences.

SERVEnet—Youth Service America

Through SERVEnet, young people can find community service and other volunteer experiences. To find organizations needing help, they can click **Advanced Search** in the **Get Involved!** box. There they can get a close match by specifying their skills, areas of interest, ZIP code, and so on. They can also search SERVEnet for job openings, recommended books about community service, and strategies for effective volunteering.

Visit: www.servenet.org

VolunteerMatch

This nonprofit, online service helps interested volunteers get involved with community service organizations throughout the United States.

To find an opportunity for kids or teenagers, visit www.volunteermatch.org/results, and click the **Search** tab at the top of the page. Type the appropriate ZIP code, check the boxes **Great for Kids** or **Great for Teens**, and then click the **Search** button.

Learn and Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC)

NSLC supports those interested in strengthening schools and communities using activities that teach young people through volunteer service.

Visit: www.servicelearning.org

STRATEGY # 4

Develop work-based learning experiences

Work-based learning experiences combine temporary jobs with specific learning objectives. The work experience can be short-term, long-term, or part-time; it can be either paid or unpaid. Work experience programs may be run by government agencies, community organizations, or schools, often as part of school-to-career programs. (See "Explore vocational or technical classes," page 22, for examples.) Summer work experience programs are often available for youth starting at middle school age. Older young people who have completed a particular course of study may find internships in that area—for example, in early childhood development.

Work experience in a safe, supervised, and real work setting can provide young people with the opportunity to practice skills, test their capabilities, and refine their career interests and goals. A positive work experience and references will also improve their employability.

Suggestions for setting up a quality work experience

- Visit and evaluate work experience sites and staff before you place young people there.
- Match youth to work sites that meet their individual career goals.
- Develop a written agreement for the young people, the work site, and the sponsoring agency or school. It should specify the length of the work experience and describe everyone's roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
- Identify a work site supervisor who will coach youth and help solve any problems that may arise. Make sure the supervisor knows you're available to help.
- Work with young people to evaluate the on-site learning experience with everyone, to make sure that their learning goals are being met.

UPS school-to-work programs

United Parcel Service has established a number of school-to-work programs around the country. High school students in the program work part-time for UPS in the afternoon or evening, and attend a postsecondary course at a UPS facility twice a week. All part-time UPS employees receive wages and full health benefits, paid vacation, and a 401(k) plan.

Through UPS, colleges and nonprofit agencies collaborate to create programs that are tailored to meet the unique educational and employment needs of each community. Some programs work with four-year colleges, while others work with community colleges and technical or trade schools.

For details, visit www.community.ups.com and click **Education**, then **School to Work**.

- Communicate regularly and frequently with young people and their supervisor, and make regular site visits to see how the experience is going.

STRATEGY # 5

Explore vocational or technical classes

Research shows that those who participate in high school vocational or technical classes significantly increase their employability and earnings after high school. Some middle schools and most high schools offer a variety of school-to-career classes and programs. Some offer the opportunity to earn credits that young people can apply to programs after high school. Make sure young people and their caregivers are aware of the full range of options, particularly if they have changed schools mid-year.

In today's increasingly technological society, basic computer skills are required even for entry-level jobs. Make certain that young people develop basic computer competence through classes at school or in the community. You can also:

- Help young people get a complete list of general and special education work-related classes at school and throughout the district.
- Review the options with the youth, their caregivers, and any mentor they may have. Use career assessment results to help guide decisions about which program to participate in.
- Help them schedule an appointment with their high school counselor or advisor for a tour and possible enrollment.
- Engage their mentor, caregivers, or other significant adult to support completion of the classes.
- Help them find a community-based work experience or job related to the training.
- Help them evaluate whether they should continue this course of training during high school and after graduation.

STRATEGY # 6

Introduce entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the process of creating, operating, and growing a business; it's also the process by which a person learns to become an entrepreneur. Surveys show that many young people are very interested in developing their own businesses, but lack the necessary knowledge about business and the economy, and do not feel they are taught much about entrepreneurship in school.

A number of studies show that two factors in particular positively affect the development of young entrepreneurs: relationships with mentors who own small businesses and early entrepreneurial education. Studies also show that entrepreneurial training programs are most successful when they not only teach economic and business information but also address the development of positive attitudes and motivation. These programs benefit young people even if they decide not to become entrepreneurs.[4]

Entrepreneurship can begin with such childhood businesses as a lemonade stand, delivering papers, or babysitting. You can also help by organizing such career exploration activities as informational interviews, job shadows, and work experiences with entrepreneurs. Encourage participation in school courses and activities that provide entrepreneurship education—for example, Junior Achievement. At least one organization, Independent Means, provides summer camps to promote entrepreneurial interests in young people.

[4] The points made in these two paragraphs are based on two sources:

a. The results of a 1994 Gallup survey sponsored by the Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership, as reported in B. Dabson and B. Kauffman (1998). Enterprising youth in America: A review of youth enterprise programs. Washington, DC: Corporation for Enterprise Development.

b. W. B. Walstad and M. L. Kourilsky (2001). Entrepreneurial attitudes and knowledge of black youth. Los Angeles, CA: Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership.

Resources for developing young entrepreneurs

Our Piece of the Pie (OPP)

This program provides the continuum of employment and job readiness experiences. OPP serves urban youth, mostly youth of color, starting at about age 14, and involves younger ones in youth businesses in a Youth Business Center. There, master craftsmen mentor them in running a business and producing a product—guitars, drums, greeting cards, hip-hop music, boats, or a newspaper). When they get older, they're placed in job shadowing experiences and internships, or in part-time jobs with UPS and other companies.

To learn more about Our Piece of the Pie, and how you might replicate all or part of their model, contact:
Southend Community Services
Phone: (860) 723-5407
E-mail: brian.hannon@scservices.org

Other entrepreneurial resources

Junior Achievement is the world's largest organization dedicated to educating young people about business, economics, and free enterprise. Programs are taught by volunteers both in class and after school at locations all over the United States. Visit www.ja.org/programs/programs.shtml for links to educational resources about entrepreneurship for young people.

BizKids (www.bizkidsonline.com for materials) is a weekly 30-minute after-school TV show for 9- to 13-year-olds that teaches them the basics of business by profiling kids who have successfully started their own businesses.

The U.S. Small Business Administration introduces teenagers to the concept of small business ownership as a viable career choice at its "Teen Entrepreneurial Guide" Web site: www.sba.gov/teens/faqs1.html.

Independent Means (www.independentmeans.com) provides programs, camps, seminars, books, newsletters, games, and the like for kids, caregivers, and mentors.

National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) teaches entrepreneurship to low-income young people age 11 to 18. Visit www.nfte.com for details.

The Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership Clearinghouse on Entrepreneurial Education (CELCEE) collects, indexes, and abstracts information about entrepreneurial education worldwide. Visit www.celcee.edu for details.

STRATEGY # 7

Improvise other individual and group activities

Keep young people thinking about future employment by weaving career exploration activities into your meetings with them and into formal and informal group activities. Some suggestions:

- Use any trips you may make with children or teens—out to dinner for a monthly visit, purchasing clothing, visiting a birth parent—as an opportunity to talk about the work you see going on around you.
- Use videos, movies, newspaper articles, and other media that portray various career paths as a basis for discussion.
- Take individual and group field trips to various job sites in which young people express an interest.
- Ask young people to interview five adults about their jobs and work experiences, making sure they include adults from their cultural background.
- Attend an employment event together, such as a community or hospital job fair.
- Connect youth with college students who are pursuing career options that require a college education.
- Invite a diverse group of adults (including program staff) or employed young adults to talk about their training and work experiences.

Resources for exploring careers

The Riley Guide

For great annotated descriptions of federal and other career search Web sites, visit www.rileyguide.com, click **Prepare to Search**, and then click **Explore Career Options**. You'll get the flavor of the descriptions by choosing **Career and Occupational Guides**, such as this one for Career Voyages at www.careervoyages.gov:

". . . wonderful career exploration tool from the DOL and Department of Education. Different sections guide young people, career changers, parents, and even career advisors to resources and information designed to help with choosing and preparing for a career, moving from one career to another, guiding your child to a great career, or even assisting your clients in their search . . . one great and easy-to-use package for exploration and discovery. Once again, your tax dollars hard at work for you."

CareerShip

This Web site, http://mapping-your-future.org/features/careership/, is an online career exploration adventure geared toward middle school students.

Another career exploration resource

The Real Life Fair

The Stepping Stones Program in Rapid City, South Dakota, has designed the Real Life Fair, a hands-on event that gives young people the chance to explore different careers and experience how career decisions would affect their lifestyle. It's been used around the country for many years to great acclaim from everyone involved—students, teachers, counselors, and transition specialists.

To prepare for the fair, youth consider their career interests, research jobs, fill out job applications, write résumés, prepare sample letters of reference, practice interviewing, and so on. During the fair, young people use these skills in a simulation of working life. They draw a salary based on the career cluster and level of education they want to pursue. With this salary, they prepare a budget and struggle with such financial trade-offs as choosing a nicer apartment and having to ride the bus rather than buying a car. Whatever their choices, they must not overspend their salary by the time the fair draws to a close.

Each budget area has a station staffed by a community volunteer. Everyone visits the housing station, looks over the cars in the parking lot at the car station, writes checks for the insurance they purchase, and figures out how much money they are making in the "real-life" job they chose. The fair is alive with pizzas, music, sports equipment, pets, visual materials of all kinds, and so on.

You can buy a CD with all the materials you need to create your own Real Life Fair—instructions for coordinating a fair, letters for volunteers, signs and banners, a PowerPoint presentation to prepare youth for the event, evaluation forms, and so on. There is also a 16-minute video showing a Real Life Fair in action, with youth and professionals describing the activities to better help people understand the event.

To learn more about this program or to order materials, contact:
Jane O'Leary
Phone: (605) 342-9030
E-mail: joleary@lsssd.org

find it

in this section

Build job readiness skills

Note: Financial education and accumulation of assets—two important activities for young people new to the workplace—are often discussed as a part of job readiness training. These topics will be included in the upcoming *It's My Life: Life Skills* guide.

Job readiness training prepares young people to understand and meet the basic demands of conducting a job search and holding down a job. The skills they need range from motivation to work to job application skills; for the full list, see the benchmarks that follow.

Some young people who aren't able to meet the benchmarks for conducting a job search—for example, they can't complete job applications or résumés on their own or interview well—still turn out to be terrific employees. So will others who seem to have no motivation to prepare for employment, because often it is actual work experience that teaches young people how to hold down a job.

Some young people with disabilities—up to 40 percent of youth in foster care—may need special assistance in getting ready to hold a job. In general, the term *disabled* is used to describe a youth who has mental, physical, or emotional impairments that affect his or her ability to learn. You can play a critical role in making sure that these young people have access to the special vocational services, entitlement programs, and community-based services (both public and private) that can make a significant difference in their transition from care to employment.

An important part of job readiness is helping young people practice ways to handle discriminatory situations successfully. Take every opportunity to talk about all forms of discrimination with young people. Don't let sensitivity about using the appropriate language, conveying the right message, or being politically correct interfere with open discussions.

Finally, prepare young people for the diversity in today's workplace and to learn the responsibilities they will have on the job.

Benchmarks for job readiness

As you work with young people, assess whether they demonstrate job readiness in the following areas:

Motivation

- Can express reasons for wanting a job.
- Has the confidence, energy, and persistence to look for a job, and the necessary supports to succeed.

Organizational skills, including time management

- Succeeds in structured environments, such as school.
- Is punctual and prepared for appointments, group meetings, and classes.
- Has an employment portfolio or other system for managing and keeping together job search and employment records.
- Is equipped with a telephone number and voice mail to get messages, a library card, a personal calendar for appointments, and the like.

Job application skills

- Has the proper identification to establish identity and employment eligibility. (This usually means photo identification and a Social Security card or birth certificate. For the complete list of acceptable documents, visit http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/i-9.htm.)
- Male age 18 and older: has registered for Selective Service.
- Has a completed fact sheet for use in submitting applications, and knows how to neatly complete forms and submit them.
- Has a current résumé.
- Can write a cover letter.
- Has an up-to-date list of references and, preferably, at least one letter of recommendation.
- Can use job search resources in the community.
- Understands how the interview process works and has practiced responding to common interview questions.

NYEC Voices of Diversity

Voices of Diversity is a magazine produced by and for young people, published by the National Youth Employment Coalition. *The Guide*, a companion to the magazine, helps school and program staff discuss institutional racism with youth age 14 and up. You can get sample issues of the magazine and more information about *The Guide* at www.nyec.org/voicesofdiversity.

Selective Service information

Male U.S. citizens (regardless of where they live) and male immigrants residing in the U.S. (permanent resident aliens) are required to register for the Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday. That is, to be in full compliance with the law, men turning 18 should register within a 60-day window of time beginning 30 days before and ending 30 days after their 18th birthday. Men who do not register within that period are technically in violation of the law and should register as soon as possible. Late registrations are accepted, but not once men reach age 26.

Failure to register may make young men ineligible for federally funded employment programs (such as those funded by the Workforce Investment Act) or for federal jobs.

Young men may obtain registration cards at any post office or may register online at www.sss.gov/regver/register.asp.

Expectations of the work setting and work ethic

- Has developed a realistic picture of what work will be like and the demands of the particular jobs being considered.
- Knows how to handle common work situations such as calling in late or sick, requesting time off, reporting accidents, participating in performance evaluations, providing notice of leaving a job, and so on.

Social skills and maintaining workplace relationships

- Knows and demonstrates good manners, respect for others, and appropriate boundaries.
- Understands the function of supervision, knows how to accept criticism and compliments, can manage anger, and has ideas about how to deal with discrimination in the workplace.
- Practices good personal hygiene and knows how to dress appropriately for different situations.
- Understands that an unorthodox personal style—body piercing, tattoos, unconventional hairstyle, and the like—may require compromises or limit work choices.

We recommend the following four strategies to build job readiness skills:

1. Develop a career plan.
2. Build an employment portfolio.
3. Pursue job readiness activities.
4. Use IDEA and Section 504 to promote job readiness for young people with disabilities.

Other resources

Refer to "Developing Employment-Based Connections in the Community" (page 59) for other organizations and programs that may help you implement these strategies.

STRATEGY # 1

Develop a career plan

A career plan identifies a career goal, the requirements needed to follow that career, and a plan for reaching the goal. In developing a career plan, young people need to identify what they want to do, define how to get there, and put it in writing. Developing a career plan pushes them to identify the specific steps they must take to reach their goals. Career plans for adolescents are likely to be very general, but as young people get older, their plans will become more specific.

STRATEGY # 2

Build an employment portfolio

An employment portfolio is a practical way for young people to organize and store information about their education and work experiences, and the skills they've developed, to make it easier to apply for jobs and training. The process of creating a portfolio and keeping it up to date reinforces young people's goals and promotes self-awareness.

On a practical level, the portfolio keeps work- and career-related documents in one place so they're readily available when needed. Having complete documentation readily accessible will help young people when they apply for jobs, training, or further education. Any office supply store or catalog contains a number of relatively inexpensive yet durable plastic portfolios useful for this purpose.

Begin the process of building the portfolio early. In the middle school years, youth should begin the process and keep records of awards, job shadows, volunteer work experience, and the like, in preparation for developing a résumé later. Encourage them to make a habit of getting a letter of reference from successful job shadows, volunteer experiences, and jobs.

Resources for developing a career plan

Mapping Your Future

This Web site, www.mapping-your-future.org/planning/careerpl.htm, provides career development activities and career plan templates for middle school, high school, and adult students. It provides helpful hints for considering careers, and suggests steps youth might take to reach their career goals.

Nextsteps.org

For a good short guide to career planning and decision-making for young people age 15 to 24, visit www.nextsteps.org. Under **Take the Steps to Career Success!** click the topics under **Career Planning**.

YouthJobs

Visit www.youthjobs.ca/portfolio.html for easy-to-follow steps to build an employment portfolio. This colorful, friendly site explains what a portfolio is, why it's important, and what information to collect for it. Those who learn better by listening can click the radio to hear the information.

A portfolio can include the following information:

- Career plan and a chart tracking the achievement of goals
- A list of formal education and training courses taken and transcripts
- Copies of certifications and awards
- Work and volunteer experience as well as job shadows and other career exploration activities
- A list of references with contact information
- Copies of reference letters
- Copies of work eligibility documentation (birth certificate, picture ID, Social Security card, immunization records, work permit or visa (if necessary), and so on
- Pay stubs and tax records
- A completed generic job application
- Current maps and bus schedules
- A record, including dates and places, of job applications turned in and interviews scheduled
- Personal interests and hobbies

Getting documents commonly needed for employment

These Web sites describe the documents young people need in order to apply for employment, as well as how to get them. Some documents, such as immunization records or birth certificates, can be hard to come by, so youth often need help in writing to request documents or in paying fees.

- Federal identity and employment eligibility requirements: http://uscis.gov/graphics/formsfee/forms/i-9.htm
- Birth certificate: www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm
- Social Security card: www.ssa.gov/ and click **Your Social Security Card Number**.
- Photo identification or driver's license: www.dmv.org/connect-to-local-dmv.php
- High school or postsecondary academic transcripts: www.ordertranscripts.com

- Immunization record: www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/immuniz-records.htm
- Temporary work visa, if not a U.S. citizen: http://uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/ead.htm
- Work permit, if needed: www.dllr.state.md.us/labor/empm.html

STRATEGY # 3

Pursue job readiness activities

Everyone follows the same basic process to get almost any job, from fast food to management:

- Conduct a job search.
- Submit a job application, which may include a résumé and cover letter.
- Qualify for the position with the employer, usually by going in for an interview and providing references, and sometimes by demonstrating other qualifications necessary for the job—e.g., keyboarding skills, physical stamina, or terminology.

By middle school age, youth should understand and begin preparing for this process by completing a résumé and learning interview basics. In high school and beyond, they should continue to build their skills and resources in this area as they work.

Group settings offer a particularly effective way for young people to learn job readiness and job search skills. A well-run group introduces an element of fun to what can otherwise be pretty boring instruction—for example, using games (like Jeopardy) and contests to demonstrate proficiency with new knowledge. Groups create a setting where young people can learn from each other by practicing new social skills such as shaking hands, role-playing an interview, and so on. A group also provides the opportunity to invite speakers, such as employers, to discuss pertinent topics.

Take advantage of community and school programs that teach such job readiness skills as preparing a résumé, developing

Tips from job readiness trainers

- "Motivation is what counts here. You have to get them to want to come in for the classes. *Always* have food—preferably pizza. Have them get the pizza and drinks ready—that's where some of the real conversations occur. You can learn a lot about their concerns, and then make sure you address those in the classes."
- "Payment incentives have worked for us. Attending the classes is like a job; you're expected to be there, and you get paid. It teaches the connection."

Resources for job readiness

The Riley Guide

For great resources and information on résumés and cover letters, interviewing, and other aspects of job readiness, visit www.rileyguide.com. Click **Network, Interview, & Negotiate.**

YouthJobs

Visit www.youthjobs.ca/where.html for information related to many aspects of job readiness, including putting together a résumé, writing a cover letter, and interviewing. Those who learn better by listening can click the radio to hear the information.

Quintessential Careers

Visit www.Quintcareers.com and click **Open Our Career Toolkit** for a list of "Job Hunting Do's and Don'ts."

interviewing skills, and learning how to conduct a job search. Alternatively, plan your own group activities to help young people gain confidence and get ready to go to work:

- "What would you do if . . . ?" Discuss difficult work situations, such as an unethical or discriminatory business practice, a slacker team member, substance abuse by co-workers, sexual harassment, and the like.
- Set up mock job interviews or role-play customer service scenarios. Videotaping is a plus.
- Invite employers to talk about their expectations of employees, or ask program staff to talk about their experiences in different work settings.
- Present panels of employers and employees to discuss specific workplace issues such as drug testing or racism.
- Organize "Dress for Success" days.
- Play "Employment Jeopardy" to learn such terms as "résumé," "bonded," "reference," "benefit," "compensation," "harassment," and so on.
- Have college students discuss how they balance school and employment.

STRATEGY #4

Use IDEA and Section 504 to promote employment for young people with disabilities

Two primary laws protect students with disabilities and offer them special assistance in their transition to employment: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Students are eligible for IDEA if they have a disability in one or more of 12 specific disability categories and, because of that disability, need special education and related services. Students are eligible for 504 if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, walking, or seeing.

Section 504 provides services to a broader group of students than IDEA because it has a more expansive definition of disability. Therefore, if students are eligible for IDEA, they are eligible for the protections of 504. But not all disabled students who are entitled to Section 504 services are eligible for special education under IDEA.

If you suspect that a young person you're working with has a disability and does not have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or a 504 plan, ask the school district to evaluate the youth. By law, you as a practitioner have the right to participate on the planning team and be involved in the process of developing IEPs and 504 plans.

Working with IDEA

IDEA establishes the right of children and young adults with a disability, age 3 to 21, to receive special education tailored to their unique needs. It also describes how services are to be delivered in an IEP. The plan must help students make the transition from school to postsecondary education, vocational training, or employment, and living independently. In these plans, schools must specify what employment-related activities, such as those listed below, young people will be involved in. By age 14, students must be invited to participate and be actively involved in their IEP meetings.

Employment-related activities and concerns that might be included in the plan are:

- Vocational and career assessment services
- Work-study programs
- Regular or special education vocational and technical programs
- Community-based instruction (teaching young people in a natural setting in the community)
- Internships and job shadowing experiences
- Special accommodations for apprenticeship, college entrance, or other exams that may be required for admission to a training program or school
- Referral of older youth to adult service providers such as vocational rehabilitation

- Specific accommodations needed to succeed in the program, such as a job coach
- Follow-up services, such as contacting employers to see how young people are doing on the job

Working with Section 504

Section 504 is an anti-discrimination law that protects the rights of people with disabilities. It provides youth with the accommodations and support they need to participate successfully in a regular curriculum—for example, extended time for written tests or a quiet place to work for those who are easily distracted.

TeamChild

Team Child publishes *Make a Difference in a Child's Life*, which you can download from the Web site at no cost. It provides information about how to advocate for the educational and transition needs of youth in out-of-home care, especially using IEPs and 504 plans. It includes instructions on how to communicate with school personnel, and offers interpretations of IDEA, Section 504, and state laws related to special education.

To get your copy, visit www.teamchild.org.

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities

The National Information Center is a site with a comprehensive list of publications on what works for young people with disabilities. One publication, *Transition Planning: A Team Effort*, includes advice about how to identify community resources and develop interagency teams to meet transition needs

Visit: www.nichcy.org/transitn.asp

find it

in this section

Help young people get and keep jobs

Today's jobs can fall into two categories. The nonprofit Workforce Strategy Center describes them this way:

- High-wage positions with a continuing career pathway. These jobs, in areas such as manufacturing or technology, typically require advanced training or skills, and offer continuing career opportunities to successful individuals.
- Low-wage entry-level jobs. These positions, such as those in the fast-growing service sector, typically require minimum training, pay low wages, and offer little prospect for career advancement. Recent early data from the welfare-to-work demonstration shows that, contrary to the belief held by some, these low-level jobs do not usually provide a career ladder into economic self-sufficiency.[5]

Young people should start looking for work experience as early as possible—whether it's taking a job or starting their own "business." Data shows that the young adults who are most likely to get jobs had some work experience during their high school years. Statistics also indicate that young people who have worked before their 18th birthdays are four times more likely to graduate from high school than those who have not, and that those who fared best on their own are those who have gained significant job experience while in foster care.[6]

Of necessity, many young people start work in low-wage entry-level jobs, but you can help them understand how such jobs fit into their career plans. Point out the transferable skills—reliability and punctuality, the ability to work with customers or without direct supervision, and so on. Help young people identify their competency in those areas, and identify how that can help them advance to a better position.

[5] Workforce Strategy Center (2000). Promising practices: School to career and post-secondary education for foster care youth, A guide for policymakers and practitioners. Retrieved August 2, 2004, from www.workforcestrategy.org/6_1.html.

[6] Youth Transition Funders Group Foster Care Work Group with the Finance Project (2004). Connected by 25: A plan for investing in successful futures for foster youth, p. 27.

For many young people, keeping a job is often more challenging than getting one. Don't omit the crucial steps that will help youth thrive on the job or learn from a bad experience rather than being demoralized by it. And when they are succeeding in a full-time job, that's the time to start talking about the next steps for advancing toward the goals in their career plan.

Also, remember that many young people do not develop the skills, attitudes, and internal motivation they need to get and keep jobs by the time they're expected to support themselves. Experts who work with vulnerable youth believe that they need to make a mental and emotional decision, a transformation, to change their situation. If opportunities aren't available at that point, they may not be able to make the needed change.[7] This means that professionals and programs should expect and plan for services to young people who require more time or repeated placements to succeed.

Other resources

Refer to "Developing Employment-Based Connections in the Community" (page 59) for other organizations and programs that may help you implement these strategies.

Benchmarks for success in getting and keeping a job

Make sure young people have:

- A career plan that addresses current and long-term employment goals. (For details on developing a career plan, see page 31.)
- An ongoing support system and relationships with people who will encourage their success, as well as strategies, if necessary, to deal with those who might undermine their efforts.
- Opportunities to discuss what they are learning from both positive and negative work experiences.
- Sufficient contact with and trust in you or other adults to help solve potential problems at work.
- Encouragement and help in planning for further skills training, education, and continued career development.

[7] M. Wald and T. Martinez (2003). Connected by 25: Improving the life chances of the country's most vulnerable 14–24 year olds. Working paper. Menlo Park, CA: William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

We recommend the following four strategies to help young people get and keep jobs.

1. Collect job leads and develop job opportunities.
2. Coach young people through the job of getting a job.
3. Clarify job responsibilities, benefits, and rights.
4. Help young people keep working.

STRATEGY # 1

Collect job leads and develop job opportunities

Collect job leads

- Teach young people to network. This includes asking friends, relatives, and co-workers to forward any job leads they come across.
- Show youth how to look for jobs in local papers—in employment and business news, and in classifieds in small community and ethnic newspapers as well as the major dailies.
- Collect lists of Internet job search sites, and demonstrate how to use them.
- Pay attention to Help Wanted signs.
- Encourage young people to visit nearby malls or shopping areas and go from store to store asking about job opportunities and collecting applications.
- Put up a jobs bulletin board, and keep it current.
- Keep copies of current job application forms for local employers who hire frequently—TacoTime, McDonald's, Blockbuster, and the like—so youth can go into a store with a fully completed application.
- Go with young people to the employment One-Stop center; introduce them to the WIA case managers there. (See page 53 for details about these programs.)

- Help young people find a job club where they can join their peers in learning job search skills and getting support.

Develop job opportunities

Job development is about cultivating relationships with employers to create job leads. Often these may be leads for full-time jobs, but don't discount part-time and temporary jobs, which can be important for several reasons. These are the only kinds of jobs many young people can hold because of school or training schedules. Companies often hire temporary employees who prove to be good workers, and part-time jobs give young people a way to try out different kinds of work without a huge commitment of time. Finally, if a young person has already lost a permanent job, a temp position may be a good next placement to demonstrate commitment if you're concerned about jeopardizing relationships and future opportunities with employers offering permanent jobs.

Educate employers. Employers are often willing to make accommodations to hire youth currently and formerly in foster care, once you make them aware of their special needs. For example, an employer may allow you to sit in on the interview with a qualified applicant who struggles with the interview process.

Screen potential applicants for employers. Let employers know that you can save them time (and money) by referring qualified applicants. For example, if an employer requires basic computer skills, find out exactly what skills are required and how the employer tests for them, and then make certain that any young person you refer has those skills.

Make sure applicants have appropriate training. Talk to employers about the kind of training they require for a job, and then try to arrange that training for potential applicants. For example, if an employer needs employees with a food handler's permit, candidates who have one may have an edge. Some inexpensive short-term training available in many communities—forklift training, flagger certification training, and the like—can open job opportunities.

Tell employers about the kinds of ongoing support you can provide to help young people succeed on the job—for example, coaching in customer service skills. This might be just

the incentive employers need to hire a young person they might not otherwise employ.

Create opportunities for part-time and temporary jobs in particular by establishing a good working relationship with temp agencies.

Look for supportive work settings

Some workplaces are better than others in supporting nondiscrimination and equal treatment on the job. Place young people where they have the best chance of success. For young people still struggling with identity issues, it is extremely important to be in a supportive workplace. Young adults of color, those who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, and those who have disabilities all need to work where their differences are accepted, not discriminated against.

In particular, tell young people who have disabilities about the protections offered under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). One fundamental principle of the ADA is that individuals with disabilities who want to work and are qualified must have an equal opportunity to do so.

Resources for developing job opportunities

A vast number of free Web sites showcase job search tools and career information as well as allow online applications for jobs. A few of the most prominent are listed below.

- **America's Job Bank** (www.AJB.dni.us) is a joint effort by the U.S. Department of Labor and state Employment Security Agencies
- **Career Builder:** www.careerbuilder.com
- **Employment Guide:** www.employmentguide.com
- **Yahoo! Hot Jobs:** www.hotjobs.com

A number of free job search Web sites target particular groups—for example:

- **The Black Collegian Online:** www.black-collegian.com
- **Diversity Working:** www.diversityworking.com/home/
- **Job Latino:** www.joblatino.com
- **Monster Jobs:** http://diversity.monster.com

STRATEGY # 2

Coach young people through the job of getting a job

Help young people create and use an employment portfolio to organize job search materials and to track the job search process, keeping a record of the jobs they've applied for. (See page 31 for details on building an employment portfolio.)

Remind them that interviewing is a skill learned through practice, and that it's a two-way process. Emphasize that they can use the interview to find out if the job is right for them, and help them develop and write down questions they might want to ask. Role-play interviewing so they can practice answering and asking questions.

Encourage young people to apply for many jobs to maximize their chances and choices.

Encourage them to follow up on applications they've submitted. Have them find the name of the hiring supervisor, and inquire when the business plans to make the hiring decision. These inquiries show responsibility, initiative, self-confidence, and follow-through.

Help young people to analyze job offers. Young people, especially those looking for entry-level work, often believe they need to take the first job they're offered. Or they may hold out for the perfect job and let reasonable opportunities pass them by—for example, turning down a job when a schedule change or some other reasonable alteration to the offer might be negotiated. You can help by having a thorough discussion with them about each job and all its aspects—type of work, work environment, pay, benefits, location, experience to be gained, transferable skills, and so on.

Teach salary negotiation techniques as young adults develop job skills that could enable them to move up to higher-paying positions.

Help young people who face barriers to employment due to legal issues connect with local legal aid offices, public

Young People Speak Out

How a résumé helped land a job

"I used to spend all day picking up applications at the mall, and when I got them home they just never ended up getting filled out or turned in. My aunt made me a paper that had the answers applications always asked for—it looked like a real résumé even though I hadn't finished high school and only had one paid summer job for a neighbor.

The next time I went out looking for a job, I didn't have to bring any applications home at all.Most places just stapled my résumé to their application form and that was it. I got job offers from two different Safeway stores within the week—my aunt says that the résumé made my application stand out from all the others and that's what made the difference."

—Paul, 17

Resources for clarifying rights for young workers

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health For "Information for Young Workers," "Stories about Injuries to Young Workers," and other articles, as well as links to related Web sites, visit www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/youth.

OSHA's Teen Workers provides information for teens, educators, parents, and employers on health and safety issues for young workers. Visit www.osha.gov/SLTC/teenworkers/index.html.

YouthRules! For information about regulations that affect young workers in the U.S., visit www.youthrules.dol.gov/.

defenders, probation officers, or community-based organizations that can help. For example, sometimes juvenile records can be sealed; some agencies have special programs to provide bonding for young people who would otherwise be ineligible.

STRATEGY # 3

Clarify job benefits and rights

When new employees start to work, they may be overwhelmed by the deluge of information typical of a new job. After the first day or two, sit down with them to make sure they understand their specific job duties. Also make sure they understand the benefits and rights that go with their job, their responsibilities regarding these company policies, and whom to go to for more information about:

- Work hours, breaks and meal periods, overtime
- Dress codes, phone protocols, eating and smoking areas, parking, and other such company policies and procedures
- Pay periods, timesheets, paychecks, and taxes
- How to notify the employer about illness, medical appointments, vacations, being late, and so on
- Disability accommodations, if any
- Benefits available, any benefit choices, and how to take advantage of the benefits
- On-site training, promotions, and other job opportunities that may be available

Remind young people that as workers they have rights—for example, everyone has the basic right not to be sexually harassed, discriminated against, or subjected to any type of abuse at work. (You may need to help them distinguish between a tough and an abusive manager.) Even if this information has

been covered in job readiness training, review it in the context of the new job. Help identify formal or informal complaint procedures they can use if they experience discrimination or abuse.

STRATEGY # 4

Help young people keep working

Support young people

Based on your assessment of a young person's confidence level, organizational ability, and previous work experience, help them work through the logistics of being prepared for and getting to the job in the first days and weeks. Your help may make the difference between success and failure, so consider with them:

- Developing a plan for making certain they wake up on time—for example, you might give a wake-up call the first couple of days.
- Making a plan for how they will get to work, and setting up contingency plans in case things go awry—for example, if they miss the bus, you might drive them to work.
- Practicing bus routes in advance.
- Planning a schedule for the workday.
- Calling at the end of the first day to debrief, asking how the day went. With a high-risk employee, you may want to do this daily for a while.
- Developing a plan with them for appropriate continued support, including what to do and whom to call about unexpected work-related issues or crises.

Support the employer

Supporting employers may be a part of a job development agreement, or employers may simply like knowing that you're available to help if problems arise. In either case, if you plan to offer support, clarify your role with both the employer and the

young people. (Note, too, that some employers may not want any outside support or involvement.)

- **Be specific.** Be clear and realistic with the employer about your availability and the type of help you can offer. Schedule regular meetings or telephone check-ins. Focus on supporting productivity and success.
- **Maintain confidentiality and professional boundaries.** Share with the employer only information that's related to work performance and workplace issues; young people's personal issues should be addressed only with them, outside the workplace. If you become aware that a young person is struggling, make sure that you discuss possible interventions with the youth in advance, and that you approach the employer with tact.
- **Employees with disabilities may need additional support.** Employers may welcome it, too.
- **Visit the work site.** You might have arranged a visit during your early discussions with an employer and a youth. If not, make sure to get permission from both of them before you visit.
- **Recognize employer contributions.** Send thank-you letters and invite employers to special events. When you spread the word about your program successes, mention the employers who've been especially helpful.

Resources for helping young people keep jobs

Nextsteps.org

Visit www.nextsteps.org to connect to great tips for young people about how to keep a job and move up in a company, ranging from what to do in the first day or first month to how to ask for a raise or leave a position. Click **Career Maintenance Topics** under **Take the Steps to Career Success!**

Ask the Workplace Doctors

Ask a question and get an answer from communication consultants with expertise in workplace communication, at www.west2k.com. Or browse the extensive archive to learn how the Workplace Doctors recommend dealing with such issues as verbal abuse, gossip and rumors, music at work, perfumes and odors, motivating others, getting a raise, sexual harassment, and overtime.

Resources for helping young people with disabilities keep jobs

The Job Accommodation Network (www.jan.wvu.edu/) helps workers with disabilities get and keep jobs by providing information on job accommodations, self-employment, and small business opportunities.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce (www.uschamber.com/cwp/strategies/disabilities/default) provides a wealth of information for employers regarding recruiting individuals with disabilities, accommodating them on the job, and problem-solving strategies.

Continue career development

After young people settle into a job, it's time to help them begin to plan for future jobs, including how they will obtain the education, training, or skill development they will need. Young people need to take increasing responsibility for managing this process themselves, including learning about community resources that can help them.

find it

in this section

Promote work-related education and training after high school

Note: This guide does not include information about enrolling in postsecondary academic programs leading to four-year college or university degrees. That topic will be addressed in the upcoming *It's My Life: Postsecondary Education* guide.

This guide focuses on jobs and career options after high school for those young people who will not be attending a four-year college or university. That can include working toward an A.A. (associate of arts) degree at a community college, earning a vocational or technical certificate, or getting advanced training in a specific employment area at a technical institute or trade school.

Discuss postsecondary options with students before they enter high school, without neglecting those who have no interest in going to college or who are struggling to stay in school. The classes students take in high school are important preparation for postsecondary programs. Ideally, students would select coursework and other activities that would maximize their chances of getting into the programs they've chosen. You may be able to intervene, if necessary, and help them get the classes that will increase their job prospects after high school.

Help young people understand that completing a training program significantly improves the likelihood of getting a job. Beyond gaining specific job skills, completing a program demonstrates to employers a level of motivation and follow-through—sometimes even if the training is not required for a particular job. It also enhances the self-esteem and confidence of a young job-seeker.

Some level of advanced training is especially important for those who haven't completed their high school education or GED and don't have work experience. To help build motivation for completing secondary studies, look for programs that combine work experience with completing high school. Work training programs, such as Job Corps and YouthBuild (see page 53 for

details), help at-risk young people complete their secondary education and train for work, while providing services that help them stick with the program to the end.

We recommend the following three strategies to help young adults enroll in work-related education and training after high school:

1. Help young people explore and choose appropriate training programs.
2. Help young people get funding for training.
3. Help young people from program application to graduation.

Other resources

Refer to Section 3, "Developing Employment-Based Connections in the Community" (page 59), for other organizations and programs that may help you implement these strategies.

STRATEGY # 1

Help young people explore and choose appropriate training programs

No later than the beginning of high school, initiate discussions with young people about training options, and continue these conversations as they reevaluate the pros and cons of schools and programs such as:

- Community colleges and technical schools
- Apprenticeship programs
- Federally funded skills training programs, including Workforce Investment Act programs, Job Corps, YouthBuild, and AmeriCorps
- Programs offered by the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard, including the Reserve and National Guard

Guide to Career Education

For a comprehensive directory of more than 1,000 career-focused educational institutions, including online schools, technical institutes, and vocational colleges, visit www.guidetocareereducation.com.

Why accreditation?

In the United States, accreditation is a voluntary process used to ensure quality in educational institutions by requiring them to meet certain defined standards. Accreditation may be necessary for students to receive federal funds in the form of scholarships, grants, or loans. State licensing boards and certification programs may also require graduation from an accredited program as a first step.

Help young people assess program alternatives

Visiting a program under consideration is probably the quickest way to bring it to life. Arrange to talk with staff and students, to spend some time in a class or two, and to talk with graduates from the program. In addition, suggest that young people consider the following:

Is the program a good match?

- Do the skills taught by the program match their long-term career path?
- Do they meet the eligibility criteria?
- Is a drug test required? If so, can they pass it?
- Does the program offer career or vocational assessment and counseling services?
- Is there a diverse student body? What are the completion rates by gender and ethnicity?
- If they have learning disabilities or other challenges, such as English as a second language, can the program accommodate them? For example, are tutoring services offered? Is there a fee?
- Can the program accommodate the special circumstances of youth from care who do not have families—for example, is student housing open during vacation and holidays?
- How would they get to the program? Is there public transportation, or are there other options?
- Can the program assist with other services, such as child care?

What will they get out of the program?

- Is the program accredited?
- Are there jobs open for the skills taught in the program? What is the employment rate of graduates? What are the expected earnings and benefits?
- What is the program completion rate? Why do students drop out?
- What certification or other benefits will students get by completing the program? For example, will the program help successful graduates find jobs?

What is the cost?

After you've answered these questions, see page 55 for ideas on paying for the program.

- What are the total program costs: tuition, fees, books, tools, supplies, and so on?
- What financial aid options are available? Are there scholarships? Does the program qualify for federal financial aid and Chafee ETV (Education and Training Voucher) support?
- Will young people be paid while they are in the program? Are there student employment options?
- How will they pay for expenses such as food, housing, transportation, or child care while they are enrolled?

Options for education and training after high school

Community colleges and technical schools

Community and technical colleges and technical schools (also known as vocational or trade schools) generally have open admissions policies, but may have specific requirements for enrollment in certain classes or programs. Many such schools also offer high school completion as part of their program, as well as assistance with job placement after program completion.

These schools usually provide specific skills training to prepare students for employment in particular occupations. They offer short-term certification programs that can be completed in one or two years. Some also include apprenticeship programs.

- **Vocational schools** are often publicly supported and generally affordable. They offer a wide variety of short-term training certifications for jobs such as flaggers and forklift operators, and for fields such as welding, computer repair, auto repair, and culinary arts.
- **Technical institutions** are usually two-year schools that offer instruction for professions such as medical assistant or computer programmer. Students receive certification at a level above the skilled trades but below the professional level.

Resources for community colleges and technical schools

- Find community colleges near you by clicking the name of your state at www.utexas.edu/world/comcol/state/.
- **Overview.com** (www.overview.com/colleges/) is a searchable database listing more than 900 career fields and more than 6,000 vocational schools, colleges, and universities. It includes their addresses and phone numbers and links to scholarships, sources of loans, financial aid, and advice.
- **RWM Vocational School Database** lists private post-secondary vocational schools in all 50 states. It's organized by state, and then by field. Visit www.rwm.org and click **Enter Database**.

Resources for apprenticeship programs

To see what programs are offered in your area, contact the local Apprenticeship Training Board.

For apprenticeship information by state, visit www.doleta.gov. Click **Advancing Your Career**, then click **Starting Your Career**.

- **Trade schools** provide the training needed to qualify for jobs such as truck driver, radio broadcaster, mechanic, electrician, or cosmetologist.

Apprenticeship programs

These programs offer on-the-job training and classroom instruction for workers to learn the practical and theoretical aspects of skilled occupations. More than 200 trades, such as welding and plumbing, offer apprenticeship programs. They are sponsored jointly by employer and labor groups, individual employers, and employer associations. The training is often provided through a union or a professional organization, such as the Ironworkers Union, sometimes in conjunction with a community college.

Successful completion of an apprenticeship program often leads to work that pays a higher wage, nationally recognized credentials, and transferable skills. In addition, through union-supported apprenticeship programs, new entrants are often employed and paid while training on the job under the supervision of experienced workers.

One-Stop centers: A federally funded program available nationally

Young people from out-of-home care are eligible for this comprehensive employment and training program for youth (age 14 to 21) and adults (anyone age 18 or older). Youth and adults can get employment services through the local One-Stop office funded by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) or the local Youth Council. WIA service providers are community-based organizations, schools, community colleges, or other county agencies, and they typically have strong ties to employers for job placement. (For information about WIA, see "Developing Employment-Based Connections in the Community," page 59.)

Along with appropriate supportive services, programs can include:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school (including dropout prevention)
- Mentoring by appropriate adults
- Paid and unpaid work experience (such as internships and job shadowing)

- Occupational skills training
- Leadership development
- Summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning
- Guidance, counseling, and follow-up services for young people for at least one year, as appropriate

Young People Speak Out

Job Corps

"After quitting school, I tried to find a job, but the only place I could go was McDonald's. I needed to get my diploma and some skills. I completed Job Corps with my diploma and a trade. I am now connected with a union, and will soon be making $15 an hour."

—Joe, 21, Wyoming

Learn more about One-Stop centers

To find a list of state and local WIA agencies and contact information, visit www.dol.gov/dol/location.htm.

Employment training with secondary education and other services

These programs—Job Corps and YouthBuild—serve at-risk youth with barriers to employment and education.

Job Corps is the nation's largest and most comprehensive residential, education, and job training program for at-risk young people, age 16 to 24, including young parents. Through a nationwide network of campuses, Job Corps prepares youth for stable, long-term, high-paying jobs through a comprehensive array of career development services. It integrates the teaching of academic, vocational, and employability skills with social competencies through a combination of classroom activities and practical, work-based experiences.

Learn more about Job Corps

To learn more about Job Corps and find the program nearest your community, visit www.jobcorps.org.

YouthBuild is a program for unemployed and out-of-school young people, age 16 to 24. It trains them to build and rehabilitate affordable housing in their communities while offering job training, secondary education, counseling, and leadership development opportunities.

Young People Speak Out

YouthBuild

"I was headed down the wrong road, and then I heard about YouthBuild of Rockford. Getting into the program and now becoming a staff member is the best thing that ever happened to me."

—Jose, 21, Illinois

Learn more about YouthBuild

- To get more information about YouthBuild, visit www.youthbuild.org.
- To find your local YouthBuild program, visit www.youthbuild.org/localprogram.html.

Service programs

AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs that engage more than 50,000 Americans, age 17 or older. Each year they clean parks and streams, run after-school programs, help communities respond to disasters, build affordable housing, tutor and mentor youth, and teach computer skills. Members serve full- or part-time over a 10- to 12-month period through more than 2,100 nonprofit and faith-based organizations and public agencies.

All AmeriCorps program members receive a modest living allowance, and some programs provide housing. After successfully completing a term of service, AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive funds for education; these can be used to pay higher education or training costs at qualified institutions, or to repay qualified student loans.

City Year, a program of AmeriCorps, targets young people, age 17 to 24, for a year of full-time, rigorous community service, leadership development, and civic engagement. Corps members receive a weekly stipend. In return, they make a one-year commitment and agree to complete at least 1,700 hours of service, whereupon they can graduate from City Year and receive higher education funds.

Learn more about AmeriCorps and City Year

- To learn more about joining AmeriCorps, visit www.americorps.org/joining.
- To learn more about City Year, visit www.cityyear.org.

The military

Anyone who joins the U.S. military may be eligible for training. The U.S. military offers training and opportunities for part- and full-time jobs for both officers and enlisted personnel.

STRATEGY # 2

Help young people get funding for training

Many publicly funded programs have free tuition, and some provide other support services as well. However, for schools and programs that aren't free, a number of resources can be used to help pay for tuition and sometimes living expenses. Young people transitioning from care can also likely qualify for federal financial aid for most education and training programs.

All young people *even considering* attending a vocational, technical, or trade school, community college, or other educational program should apply for federal student aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) program.

Five types of federal financial aid are available:

- Scholarships: gift aid, based on financial need or performance
- Grants: gift aid based on financial need
- Loans: must be repaid after the school or training is completed
- Work-study: paid part-time work during the school year and full-time during vacations
- Conditional scholarships or loans: loans that do not need to be repaid, in whole or in part, if the recipient renders a certain service or joins the military

The FAFSA and other financial aid applications should be submitted as soon as possible after January 1, but no sooner. This is because the needs analysis uses financial information from the previous tax year.

Resources for military programs

For more information about all branches and programs of the military, including ROTC, visit www.todaysmilitary.com.

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (www.objector.org) offers information and guidance about the Delayed Enlistment Program (DEP) and ways to finance college without joining the military.

Resources for obtaining financial aid

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

For more information or to complete an application online, visit www.fafsa.ed.gov.

The SmartStudent Guide to Financial Aid

For a comprehensive annotated collection of information about student financial aid, visit www.finaid.org.

Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)

The federal government has appropriated more than $40 million, through Chafee legislation, for education and training vouchers for young people aging out of foster care. In most cases, these state-administered funds can help pay for trade or vocational school tuition as well as housing, transportation, books, fees, and other training-related costs.

To find out what's available in your state, and to learn how to apply for these vouchers, visit www.fyi3.com/education/index.cfm.

State Tuition Waivers and Scholarships

Young people who've been in out-of-home care may be eligible for waivers of tuition fees in publicly funded postsecondary schools. The terms and conditions for using the waivers—such as eligibility requirements, the number of school terms funded, and the process for accessing the waivers—vary by state. Some states offer scholarships instead of tuition waivers.

For information, visit the National Resource Center for Youth Development: www.nrcys.ou.edu/NRCYD/tuitionwav.htm.

Casey Family Scholars Program of the Orphan Foundation of America

This program provides scholarships of up to $10,000 per young person for postsecondary education and training for unadopted young people under age 25 who have spent at least 12 months in foster care. Scholarships are renewable each year based on satisfactory progress and financial need. Participating scholars receive ongoing support through a toll-free number and regular e-mail contact with an assigned mentor.

To contact the Orphan Foundation of America, visit www.orphan.org and click **Scholarships**, then **Casey Family Scholars Scholarship**.

STRATEGY # 3

Help young people from program application to graduation

Some programs are competitive, a number maintain waiting lists, and others have narrow recruitment time frames. Young people can easily become discouraged as they try to navigate through the process.

You can help in some very concrete ways:

- Make sure young people have an updated employment portfolio with the information they'll need to apply. (See page 31 for details about building a portfolio.) Review applications with them to make certain the forms are filled out completely.
- Work with them to put application deadlines on their calendars, and plan for how they'll meet those deadlines.
- Provide your phone and address as additional contact if their contact information is likely to change.
- Help them keep their motivation up, and encourage follow-through.
- Serve as a reference.

Once they have been accepted, develop a plan together about what will be needed to stay in the program and to resolve unexpected crises. If the program includes case management, coordinate with the case manager to avoid needless and potentially confusing duplication of services.

In particular, as young people get started, you can help them:

- Practice car or bus routes in advance.
- Plan a schedule on a calendar.
- Make sure they have any required clothes, books, supplies, or equipment.
- Plan how to get to school on time, and problem-solve in advance such scenarios as oversleeping, missing the bus, illness, child care issues, and so on.

- Celebrate completion with a card, a gift, or a call, or by attending the graduation ceremony.

Even with a mature and highly capable student, it's important to check in periodically and maintain a friendly, supportive relationship through program completion.

Developing Employment-Based Connections in the Community

find it

in this section

Developing employment-based connections in the community

No one person or organization can provide all the services required to meet the diverse employment needs of young people. For that you'll need to build relationships with employers, schools and training programs, service providers, and funding organizations.

The work of developing employment connections ranges in scope from accessing services for individual youth to mobilizing the community to benefit all youth in transition. As a Seattle-based employment counselor put it, "This isn't about taking Joe down to the store for a job. This is about talking to employers about our youth. This is about making the meeting successful for Joe and for all the Joes that follow. The cornerstone of our work is educating the community about the employment needs of youth in care."

As a baseline for building these connections, gather information about community programs and keep it up to date—their eligibility criteria, their capacity to meet the needs of youth, your evaluation of the effectiveness of their services, and any barriers to access by youth in foster care. Similarly, compile information about employment opportunities—who is hiring, the kinds of jobs available, and the skills needed for those jobs.

We recommend the following seven strategies to develop these employment-based connections:

1. Educate your community about youth in foster care.
2. Reach out to create a network in your community.
3. Work with your local Chafee Independent Living Program.
4. Work with Workforce Investment Act (WIA) One-Stop programs and youth service providers.
5. Connect WIA with Independent Living Programs.
6. Work with programs serving specific groups of young people.
7. Put agreements in writing.

STRATEGY # 1

Educate your community about youth in foster care

It's amazing how little most people know about foster care and the needs of young people in the foster care system. Even other professionals specializing in programs for at-risk youth are often unfamiliar with the circumstances of young people in foster care. Many are also unfamiliar with the child welfare system and how it works.

It's our job to make sure our communities are informed about the circumstances and needs of youth in foster care, about their resilience and determination, and, most importantly, about the very tangible things members of the community can do to help these young people be successful.

Get out in the community and talk about young people in foster care

Make presentations to business groups, schools, faith-based organizations, and service clubs about the employment needs of youth in foster care.

Enlist the help of young people who are or have been in the foster care system. Nothing gets the attention of the public more than hearing directly from young people about their experiences, accomplishments, and dreams. Be sure the young people are comfortable with the information they're sharing, are prepared to respond to the questions they may be asked, and know how to gracefully dodge questions they feel uncomfortable answering.

List specific ways community members and organizations can help, such as speaking to a youth job club about the qualities they look for in employees, providing job shadow experiences, mentoring youth, serving as a work experience site, notifying you of job openings, or hiring youth.

Prepare packets of information that you can leave behind with your audience. Include information about foster care, contact information, and a list of the specific ways community members can help.

Be ready to respond quickly to offers of help quickly so volunteers don't lose momentum.

Call on the media to tell the story

Keep in mind that the news media—newspapers, radio, and television—are always on the lookout for a good story. If you can tell or provide one, you'll greatly increase the chances that it will be published or aired.

Major dailies and television and radio stations can be more difficult places to publish because they have paid staff writers (though they're not impervious to a great human interest story). But small media companies—neighborhood, ethnic, weekly, and other newspapers, as well as monthly news magazines, local radio stations, and community TV channels—are often hungry for ideas, even for stories you or young people have written.

- Ask about interest in and timelines for running human interest stories. Neighborhood papers are often interested in stories about successes with local programs and employers.
- Ask young people from the foster care system to talk to reporters about their employment needs and success stories.
- Invite the media to job fairs, graduations from training programs, and other employment-related events.
- When opportunities arise, respond to media stories about employment and foster care, including guest editorials and letters to the editor. Encourage young people to speak out about how a major story relates to their experience.

STRATEGY # 2

Create a network in your community

All the community groups mentioned below are excellent resources for helping young people to prepare for employment and enter the workforce.

Employers In addition to contacting individual businesses, look for opportunities to reach groups of employers—for example, the Chamber of Commerce, labor unions, and service clubs such as the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions. In larger metropolitan areas, contact groups that are especially concerned about diversity in the workplace—the local chapter of the NAACP or the Urban League, for example.

Schools Look for programs—for example, school-to-work programs—that promote career exploration, vocational training, and career development. Many middle schools and most high schools have a vocational counselor or career center. Larger districts will have administrative staff assigned to oversee such programs. You may also have luck with community colleges or trade and vocational/technical schools.

Providers of employment services Emphasize what you will gain by working together—increased contacts with employers, the ability to share resources and expertise, saved time, and increased opportunities for funding and for achieving positive outcomes.

Government and other community service providers Police and probation officers, human service workers, members of faith-based organizations, and others see the community impact of unemployed or underemployed young people every day. They want to know what they can do to participate in solutions. Let them know about services and resources specifically for these young people, and engage their support in implementing strategies from job shadows and mentoring to hiring young people.

A Wyoming employer enjoys working with her youth employees

"As an administrator of a law enforcement agency, I enjoy having youth as employees. Some have good work skills, some do not. I have found that each has a desire to work and learn, but each youth learns differently. As an employer, I need to take the time to give them instructions as well as *model* the skills and professionalism I want them to exemplify."

STRATEGY # 3

Work with your local Chafee Independent Living Program

The majority of young people who make the transition from state foster care are eligible for services and funds under the John Chafee Independent Living Program, although many emancipate from the foster care system without ever taking advantage of it. By educating yourself about this program in your state, you can ensure that young people get the services they're entitled to.

The Chafee program was created by federal legislation to help young people in foster care prepare for and make the transition to self-sufficiency. Program services can include:

- Case management and support groups
- Help in completing high school or a GED, and enrolling in postsecondary education or training
- Career exploration and job preparation, training, and placement
- Life skills development, including financial management training
- For young adults over age 18, housing assistance, including room and board payments, and an extension of Medicaid benefits

States receive federal funds to provide independent living services, so each state sets specific eligibility criteria for services and defines exactly which services it will provide. The states then contract with community organizations and tribes to provide the services, monitored by an Independent Living Coordinator. In addition, every child welfare region in the state has a lead person assigned to the regional Independent Living Program. Contact these state coordinators and regional leads to identify local service providers and learn about eligibility criteria and services available in your state.

National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD)

The center has a wealth of information about the Chafee Independent Living Program and the legislation that brought it into being, along with contact information for the Independent Living Coordinator in each state. Visit www.nrcys.ou.edu/NRCYD/chafee.htm.

STRATEGY # 4

Work with Workforce Investment Act (WIA) One-Stop programs and youth service providers

The majority of young people in foster care are eligible for employment and training services under the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA, which replaced the Job Training Partnership Act, or JTPA). WIA helps low-income youth and young adults find better jobs and increase their wages. The local Workforce Investment Board (which may also be known as the Workforce Development Board, Employment Consortium, or Workforce Development Council) receives funds from the Department of Labor; they, in turn, contract with local providers, who provide:

- **WIA adult services for those age 18 and older** These are delivered primarily through regional One-Stop centers—the exact name varies by area. As their name implies, these centers provide a variety of employment, education, and social services in one place.
- **WIA youth services** These are delivered by community-based organizations, schools, community colleges, or other local, city, or county agencies.

You can help make sure that young people receive the services they're entitled to by educating yourself about the WIA programs in your state. WIA can help prepare youth for postsecondary education or employment through such programs as:

- Summer jobs linked to academic and occupational learning
- Tutoring and study skills training
- Instruction leading to completion of secondary school (including dropout prevention)
- Mentoring by appropriate adults
- Paid and unpaid work experience (such as internships and job shadowing)
- Occupational skills training
- Leadership development

Young People Speak Out

One-Stop services

"I have never followed through with anything before in my life. I completed this program because many of the services I needed came to me in one place. I am glad these community people get along."

—Chris, 18, Wyoming

- Supportive services as needed
- Guidance, counseling, and follow-up services for at least one year, as needed

Resources

WIA programs

- To find your local Workforce Investment Board, visit www.doleta.gov/regions/StateContacts, click **State and Local Workforce Investment Boards**, and then click your state on the map.
- For an overview of WIA youth service programs, visit www.doleta.gov/youth_services. (Note underscore in "youth_services.")

One-Stop centers

To find the One-Stop center nearest you, visit www.careeronestop.org, and click the **Service Locator** tab at the top of the page.

Project Paycheck

This model program in Cheyenne, Wyoming, is administered by the local WIA organization. It brings together several public and private partner agencies to provide employability development services to out-of-school young people. This program combines learning basic and occupational skills; training in social and life skills, and paid work experience. Each young person is assigned a volunteer mentor from the community.

To learn more about this program and get ideas about how you can implement similar activities, contact:
Cindy Hamilton
Casey Family Programs—Cheyenne Office
Phone: (307) 638-2564
E-mail: chamilton@casey.org

Youth Employment Services (YES)

YES is a network of many partner agencies in San Diego, California, providing services in all seven domains of the *It's My Life* framework. YES services are funded by public and private resources, in addition to WIA funds.

To learn more about the YES collaborative and get ideas how you can work with your local WIA organization, contact:
Marilyn Stewart
Phone: (619) 543-0774
E-mail: mstewart@casey.org

STRATEGY # 5

Connect WIA and Independent Living Programs

Although both the Chafee Independent Living Program and WIA youth programs are federal programs that specifically target youth in foster care, no federal provisions mandate the coordination of their services, and frequently this doesn't happen. By bringing these providers together to meet the needs of young people in care, you can have a dramatic impact on the outcomes of the young people you serve.

STRATEGY # 6

Work with programs serving specific groups of young people

Some programs specialize in meeting the needs of specific groups of young people: those with disabilities, those who've been involved with the justice system, and young parents. Make a point of knowing what services these programs offer and how to access them.

Programs for young people with disabilities

The Division (or Department) of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) in every state helps young people with a physical or mental disability that makes it difficult to get and keep a job. DVR can provide assessment services, counseling and guidance, independent living services, assistive technology, training services, and job placement.

Learn more about DVR resources

To find your state DVR office, visit www.jan.wvu.edu/sbses/vocrehab.htm.

Meeting the Job-Training Needs of Foster Youth

Darryl Hamm, senior attorney with the National Center for Youth Law, wrote this concise, informative article (reprinted with permission on page 73). It describes the current Chafee and WIA programs, how they serve young people in foster care, and the opportunities for the two programs to collaborate.

Ticket to Work Program Young people age 18 and older receiving SSI or SSDI cash benefits (see below) are eligible for the Ticket to Work program, which offers work-related services and support. They get a ticket, or voucher, that can be cashed at an employment program to receive services. The programs might be offered by a public agency, like those sponsored by DVR, or by a nonprofit corporation or private business that has been approved by the Social Security Administration.

Learn more about Ticket to Work

- For more information about services for youth in transition, visit www.yourtickettowork.com and click **Youth in Transition**.
- To find local service providers in your area, visit www.yourtickettowork.com/endir.

Social Security Administration In many cases, young people with severe mental or physical disabilities can benefit from Social Security programs such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). These programs follow federal guidelines and provide financial assistance or work incentives, which may include cash benefits while working and financial assistance for further education and training.

Learn more about Social Security programs

For information, visit www.socialsecurity.gov. Under **Disability and SSI**, click **Do You qualify?** to go to a screening tool that can help determine the Social Security programs and benefits for which a young person may be eligible.

Other resources for young people with disabilities

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)

JAN (www.jan.wvu.edu/) is a free consulting service designed to increase the employability of people with disabilities by explaining worksite accommodations and by educating people with disabilities about self-employment. It also offers technical assistance regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability-related legislation.

Disability advocacy groups

Many communities have advocacy groups that offer support and referral services of various kinds. For example:

- **Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder** (CHADD) has chapters throughout the country offering services. To find a chapter near you, visit www.chadd.org. Under **What CHADD Does for You**, click **Local Support Groups**.
- **Learning Disabilities Association** (LDA) has local chapters in many communities offering services. To find a chapter near you, visit www.ldanatl.org and click **State Chapters**.
- **The Arc** works with children and adults with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities. To find a chapter near you, visit www.thearc.org/chaptersearch/.

Programs for young people involved with the justice system

Your local juvenile justice office may offer support services including mentoring, employment and training classes, and training for life skills such as behavior management. Local juvenile and adult justice offices sometimes receive federal grants for specialized programs to help young people succeed, such as the Coming Home program, an initiative that prepares communities to receive young offenders.

Resources for young people involved with the justice system

Your state's Department of Corrections office may be able to point you to resources available to young offenders. To find your local office, visit www.bop.gov. Under **BOP Directory**, click **Community Corrections Offices**.

For information about federal programs:

- The Web site of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org, is easy to browse. To find OJJDP staff in your state, click **State Contacts**, and then click your state on the map.
- For information about diversion programs, visit www.doleta.gov/youth_services/Tech_assistance.cfm. (Note underscores in "youth_services" and "Tech_assistance.")

Resources for young parents

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

- For basic information about TANF programs, visit www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/ofa/.
- The names of TANF programs vary by state. To find out what the TANF program is called in your state, visit www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/tnfnames.htm. Then refer to the government pages of your phone book to find your local TANF office.

Division of Tribal TANF Management—Office of Family Assistance

This site, www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/dts/, offers TANF information and resources targeted to American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

Programs for young parents

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provides cash assistance to families with dependent children while helping them become self-sufficient. Services are available to help pay for transportation, child care, and such things as uniforms, tools, car repairs, and school supplies. Individuals can receive funds from TANF for up to five years.

Those who receive TANF assistance will likely be required to work, and everyone participating must set up a plan for achieving work-related goals. To become eligible, young parents under the age of 18 who have not earned a high school diploma or a GED are required to return to school or to work on getting their GED.

Once young people start working, they may still be eligible for some benefits. Even after they earn enough to get off welfare, they may still be eligible for food stamps and for programs that help pay for day care and health benefits. Each state implements TANF programs in a different way, so it's important to understand the policies of your state.

STRATEGY # 7

Put agreements in writing

You can enhance the effectiveness of any collaborative agreement by putting it in writing, because a written agreement:

- Clarifies the roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- Increases the chances that programs and collaborative services will continue when there is staff turnover.
- Keeps everyone focused on the outcomes outlined in the agreement.
- Provides the formal arrangement that most funding agencies require.
- Clarifies any monetary or in-kind contributions of partners and specifies how those contributions will be used.
- Allows a legal means for sharing critical information between the child welfare agency and youth service provider while protecting young people's privacy.

Appendix

Employment preparation starts early: Ten activities for caregivers

Playing at work: Encourage children to play "schoolteacher" or "store." Talk about what they think people do in these jobs.

What's involved in a job: When watching TV together, challenge young children to spot as many different jobs as they can. Talk about the different careers that characters have, and let them know what type of education or training it takes to work in each field.

Skills needed for jobs: Ask younger children to name the kinds of tools or technologies that different workers need. For example, ask what kind of equipment the firefighter, postal worker, bank teller, or auto mechanic uses.

Take young people to work: Take young people to visit your workplace. Have them follow you or other employees around as you do different tasks to learn what kind of work is done at your workplace.

Volunteering in the community: Encourage young people to volunteer at places like the library, the Humane Society, a hospital, or an after-school program for younger children so they can learn about different jobs. Talk to them about what they liked or didn't like about their volunteer activities.

Why work? Challenge young people to name ten reasons why people work. Ask friends why they work and what kinds of things they are able to do (pay for a car, buy more clothes) or not do (play sports) because of having a job.

Working for what you want: If young people aren't old enough to be employed but want extra spending money, explore jobs like mowing lawns, cleaning up a neighbor's yard, or selling lemonade (and nurture young entrepreneurs in the process).

Sharing your experiences: Share memories of your first jobs. Talk about what you liked and didn't like, and how you felt when you began working. Talk about what you learned. This helps young people understand that their first job won't be their last, and that we all move on to better jobs.

Working in your area of interest: Help young people explore areas of interest when thinking about what their first job should be. If they really like pizza, they could try working in a pizza parlor; if they love clothes, they could apply at a clothing store in the local mall.

Looking for a job: Ask young people to list the different ways they could find out about a job. Have them ask their working friends or siblings how they heard about their jobs. If they know someone who works at a place where they would like to work, encourage them to ask that person about job openings.

For more ideas, *click the* **Ready, Set, Fly** *tab at* www.caseylifeskills.org.

Meeting the Job-Training Needs of Foster Youth

By Darryl Hamm, Senior Attorney
National Center for Youth Law

When a court finds that children have been abused, neglected, or abandoned, it will typically place them in the foster care system. Over the past twenty years, the number of children in the nation's foster care system has mushroomed from 302,000 to 556,000 children. If a child does not return home, become adopted, or have the court appoint a legal guardian, he or she will typically remain in foster care until they are 18 years old. At this point, courts dismiss the foster youth's case and he or she is considered to have "emancipated" from the foster care system. Every year there are nearly 20,000 youth who "emancipate" or transition from foster care into adulthood.

Unfortunately, studies have consistently shown that foster youth—particularly those who remain in care until they emancipate—are an extremely vulnerable population. For example, there are no legal obligations for child welfare agencies to keep youth in foster care if they do not have stable housing. Within the first 18 months of leaving care, foster youth become homeless at rates ranging from 24 to 50 percent. Other negative outcomes include higher than average mental health problems, drug usage and involvement with the criminal justice system.

In addition, education and employment outcomes for foster youth are particularly disturbing. Several studies have found that foster youth graduate from high school at rates hovering around 50 percent, while 85 percent of all youth between 18 to 24 years old are high school graduates. Further, both emancipated foster youth and foster youth still in care typically have far lower reading levels than their peers and higher levels of special education placement. Similarly, emancipated foster youth face daunting prospects in the area of employment. Emancipated foster youth and older youth still in foster care earn significantly less than other low-income peers. They are earning on average less than $6,000 per year in wages, which is substantially below the federal poverty level of $7,890 for a single individual. Researchers have also found that emancipated foster youth are underemployed, as no more than 45 percent of them reported earnings in any one quarter over the thirteen-quarter period of the study.

In recognition of the deficits and difficulties faced by foster youth, Congress included foster youth as one of the six targeted youth populations that are eligible to receive services in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) formula fund programs for youth. In the pending reauthorization of WIA, both houses of Congress have proposals that enhance this commitment. In the House Bill (H.R. 1261) passed on May 8, 2003, the House would expand the definition of out-of-school youth to include current and emancipated foster youth.

Although WIA recognizes the needs of foster youth, their path to job training has not been an easy one. Foster youth frequently arrive at the doorstep for job training with a range of issues that may lead many service providers to consider them as "hard-to-serve" youth. As noted above, foster youth frequently have lower educational skills and higher incidence of mental health conditions. Further complicating matters are basic difficulties with transportation; the lack of any consistent familial or adult support; and frequent placement changes that may be hundreds of miles apart. Emancipated foster youth also have the additional difficulty of finding housing.

Even apart from these obstacles, foster youth encounter additional systemic problems. For example, there are numerous federal and state laws that place some limits on how and when child welfare workers may share information with other service providers. Many child welfare systems take an overly conservative interpretation of these provisions out of an abundance of caution and refuse to share any information with WIA youth programs. As a result, WIA providers may not have vital information for developing a viable individual service strategy.

In addition, a foster youth may be pulled in two conflicting directions when they participate in a WIA youth program because they may also be receiving independent living services (ILS) through the local child welfare program. ILS programs typically include educational support, assistance with applying for college; training in daily living skills, budgeting classes, substance abuse prevention, and vocational training. In 1999, Congress passed the Foster Care Independence Act or Chafee Act (Public Law 106-169). Under the Chafee Act, the federal government doubled ILS funding from $70 to 140 million; allowed states to spend up to 30 percent of their funding on housing; offered a federal match if a state expanded Medicaid eligibility to foster youth between 18 to 21; and expanded a state's obligation to offer services to emancipated foster youth.

While the Chafee program offers much promise for foster youth, there are a number of problems, some of which affect the ability of foster youth to succeed in a WIA youth program. First, Congress has still not appropriated nearly enough funding to cover all of the needs—such as housing—that foster youth face as they transition to adulthood. Second, due in part to the limited funding, the Chafee Act does not reach nearly all of the foster youth who are eligible to receive services. Many foster youth emancipate from the foster care system without ever having been introduced to any ILS program.

Third, even when foster youth participate in an ILS program, there are no provisions mandating the coordination of these services with other programs such as WIA. The result at the individual level is a youth who has conflicting schedules that increases the likelihood that they will fail to benefit from either the ILS or WIA programs. Further, even though Chafee and WIA both require individual plans that are developed with youth's participation, these plans are rarely if ever reconciled.

Finally, unlike WIA, which has built in levels of accountability through performance measures, the accountability mechanism under Chafee is much weaker. This lax system results in a wide and inconsistent range in the quality and type of ILS services. For example, an ILS program may offer vocational services and job training, but unlike WIA programs, the ILS provider does not file federal reports to account for job training outcomes.

In the face of the myriad roadblocks facing foster youth, new collaborations are demonstrating early promise in improving both the number and the quality of job-training opportunities available to foster youth. In particular, the state of California, through a Governor's Initiative on Homelessness, has formed a foster youth subcommittee comprised of various state agencies and CBOs [community-based organizations], that has turned its attention to employment issues. The state has focused part of its initiative on registering all current foster youth at WIA One-Stop centers. In addition, the state has funded pilot projects in three California counties using a combination of state WIA and Welfare-to-Work funds. Besides the Governor's Initiative,

other California initiatives such as the Casey Great Start Program in Sacramento have also sprouted up in recent years. Common elements among all of these projects are collaborations with the county child welfare agency and independent living service programs; contracts with local providers for job-training services; identifying pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities for foster youth; referrals and supportive services; and case management support.

Early lessons learned

Many of these foster youth initiatives have just started within the past two years so there are no definitive results to date. The government agencies, providers and foster youth involved in these partnerships are very enthusiastic about the services and believe that the partnerships hold considerable promise for improving outcomes for the youth. In reviewing these programs, the providers have identified a few early lessons.

- To the extent One-Stops are involved in the projects, the greatest success occurs when steps are taken to make them as youth-friendly as possible.
- Youth specialist or peer educators who are former foster youth can be assigned to One-Stops as one effective strategy for making youth feel more comfortable.
- An extensive outreach campaign to places where foster youth are typically located will be helpful, as many foster youth report that they have not previously heard about WIA programs or One-Stop services.
- Developing a partnership or collaboration with the local Independent Living Services Program is critical for coordinating services and helping with referrals.
- Making it a priority to develop a partnership with the local housing agency, because emancipated foster youth are particularly vulnerable to being homeless and cannot fully benefit from job-training programs without housing assistance.
- Build in a strong component of case management after finding a foster youth employment,
  as job retention is particularly challenging for many foster youth.
- Those working in the child welfare system, such as social workers, need to be trained or educated about the youth workforce system. Similarly, staff of the One-Stops and providers need more training about the child welfare system.
- Foster youth and recently emancipated foster youth have a tremendous desire to be free of any regimented system after years of being in the foster care system, so programs should strive to create activities and services that maintain a level of freedom while still integrating
  the need for youth to develop job readiness skills, life skills and other responsibilities necessary to sustain employment.
- Avoid stigmatizing the program. Eligibility may turn on their foster care status, but the program need not be named a foster youth program.

These pilot programs described above and the early lessons learned hold the key for offering guidance and effective strategies for serving foster youth. Given the increased focus on foster youth that may result from the pending reauthorization of WIA; youth councils, providers, and other stakeholders should look to the above lessons when designing programs targeting foster youth.

For more information regarding foster youth or the sources for this article, please contact Darryl Hamm of the National Center for Youth Law at dhamm@youthlaw.org or (510) 835-8098.

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We welcome your comments and suggestions about the content, scope, and format of the Employment Guide.

Is it useful? Is there too much information? Not enough? Is it easy to use? Did you find any mistakes? What should we add—for example, do you know some resources that we should include in the next edition?

Please e-mail your comments or questions to:
EmploymentGuide@casey.org.

Thank you.

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